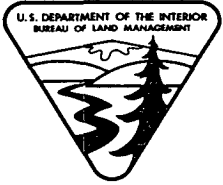




**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Land Management**  
San Luis Resource Area  
Cañon City District, Colorado

December 1991



# **SAN LUIS RESOURCE AREA**

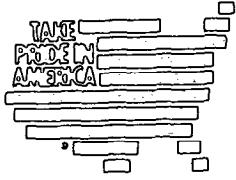
**Record of Decision and  
Approved Resource Management Plan**





# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
CANON CITY DISTRICT OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 2200  
CANON CITY, COLORADO 81215-2200



December 1991

Dear Reader:

This is a copy of the record of decision (ROD) and the approved resource management plan (RMP) for the San Luis Resource Area (SLRA). This ROD approves the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) 133 decisions for managing approximately 520,677 acres of BLM-administered lands and 623,000 acres of BLM-administered mineral estate in the SLRA.

This document has been sent to all recipients of the proposed resource management plan (RMP)/final environmental impact statement (EIS) published in September 1991. Copies of this document are available by writing: RMP Project, P.O. Box 1171, Cañon City, CO 81212-1171.

As stated in the ROD, this plan has been approved as the land use plan for the SLRA for the next 15 to 20 years. The resource objective decisions, the land use allocation decisions, and the management action decisions in this plan will guide all future uses and activities within the resource area.

We are pleased to provide this copy for your reference, and we extend our appreciation for your cooperation and assistance during this planning process.

Sincerely yours,

Donnie R. Sparks  
District Manager

**RECORD OF DECISION**  
For The  
**SAN LUIS RESOURCE AREA**  
**APPROVED RESOURCE MANAGE-  
MENT PLAN**

Prepared by:  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Cañon City District, Colorado  
San Luis Resource Area

**December 1991**

# RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE APPROVED SAN LUIS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of this document is to approve the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) decisions to manage approximately 520,677 acres of BLM-administered land and 623,000 acres of BLM-administered mineral resources in the San Luis Resource Area. These decisions will guide management for the next 15 to 20 years.

## DECISION

This record of decision (ROD), which approves the resource management plan (RMP) for the San Luis Resource Area, fulfills the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 CFR 1600). A draft and final environmental impact statement (EIS) were prepared for this plan in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Chapter 2 of the attached RMP contains the same decisions as the proposed plan and associated final EIS published in September 1991. The 133 resource objective decisions, land use allocation decisions, and management action decisions in this approved RMP will guide all future uses and activities within the resource area.

## ALTERNATIVES

Four management alternatives were considered in the development of this plan. These were identified as the Existing Management Alternative, the Natural Resource Enhancement Alternative, the Resource Production Enhancement Alternative, and the Preferred Alternative. Each alternative was described and analyzed in the draft RMP/EIS and in the proposed RMP and final EIS.

The Existing Management Alternative (the no action alternative) would have continued multiple use management in much the same manner as is currently applied. Decisions within the existing land use plans and other documents would continue to be implemented.

The Natural Resource Enhancement Alternative focused on enhancing the conservation/protection of the sensitive or unique natural resources or values. In contrast, management under the Resource Production Enhancement focused on consumption and production (i.e., timber, recreation, minerals, and grazing).

The Preferred Alternative provides guidance for a balanced or compatible mix of multiple use opportunities within the SLRA. In this alternative, both enhancement/conservation of resources and the production/consumption of resources were considered. It is this alternative that best reflects the plan considered in the proposed RMP/FEIS.

## IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING DECISIONS

Decisions in this plan will be implemented over a period of years and must be tied directly to the BLM budgeting process. An implementation schedule will be developed and signed by the district manager within 90 days of the signing of this ROD. This schedule will provide for the systematic accomplishment of all decisions in the approved RMP. Decisions will be continually monitored to ensure necessary tracking and subsequent integration into the budget system occur on a timely basis. All decisions will be reviewed quarterly to ensure correct decision implementing and monitoring are occurring. An annual assessment of the decisions within this plan will be completed by the district manager and forwarded to the state office.

## MAINTAINING AND AMENDING DECISIONS

Decisions in this plan will be continually maintained to reflect minor changes in information. Maintenance is limited to refining or further clarifying a plan decision and cannot expand the scope of the decision nor change the terms or conditions of the decisions. Maintenance will be documented in supporting records. Plan decision amendments may become necessary if major changes are needed or if large quantities of maintenance refinements occur. Plan decision amendments are accomplished with public input and environmental analysis.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

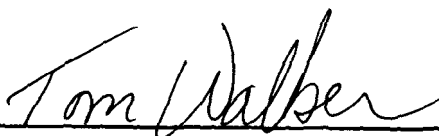
The views and concerns of the public were actively solicited throughout this planning process. Public participation is summarized in Chapter 1 of the approved RMP.

## CONSISTENCY

This plan is consistent with the plans, programs, and policies of other Federal, state, and local governmental agencies as well as those of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

## AVAILABILITY OF THIS DOCUMENT

Copies of the San Luis ROD/approved RMP are available from the San Luis Resource Area Office, 1921 State Street, Alamosa, CO 81101; Cañon City District Office, 3170 Main Street, Cañon City, CO 81212; Colorado State Office, 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, CO 80215.



Tom Walker, Associate Colorado State Director  
Bureau of Land Management



Date

# **APPROVED SAN LUIS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

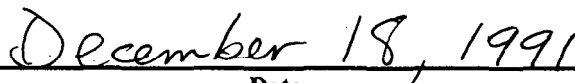
**Prepared by:  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Cañon City District, Colorado  
San Luis Resource Area**

**December 1991**



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**Tom Walker, Associate State Director, Colorado State Office**



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**Date**

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## **MAP LIST**

Areas of Special Concern Decisions – Map A

Areas of Special Concern Decisions – Map B

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This approved resource management plan (RMP) has resource objective decisions, land use allocation decisions, and management action decisions for guiding future management of lands and minerals, administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), within the San Luis Resource Area (SLRA). BLM has administrative responsibility for the land and resource management on approximately 520,677 surface acres and 623,000 acres of mineral estate within the planning area. All uses and activities within this resource area will conform to the decisions described in this plan. These decisions are shown for 10 geographical reference areas within the SLRA.

This approved RMP has been prepared in accordance with planning regulations issued under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). This plan will meet the BLM statutory requirement for a master land use plan as mandated by Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. The RMP will replace all land use planning guidance in the Saguache and San Luis Management Framework Plans (MFPs) of 1973 and 1975 respectively. It will also replace all other related documents that direct land and mineral management within the SLRA; e.g., San Luis Grazing EIS, San Luis Oil & Gas Umbrella EA, etc.

Chapter 1 describes the location of the area, the relationship to the planning process and to the proposed RMP/final EIS, the distribution of these documents, and the implementing, monitoring, maintaining, and amending procedures. In Chapter 2, the management in common in all geographic areas, the decisions by geographic areas, and any necessary activity planning are described. Four large foldout maps in the pockets at the back of this plan depict the plan decisions.

### PLANNING AREA

The San Luis Resource Area of the Cañon City District encompasses approximately 520,677 acres of BLM-administered land in the San Luis Valley, which is in the south-central part of Colorado (see Maps 1-1 and 1-2). The valley is approximately 122 miles long and about 74 miles wide extending from the Continental Divide on the northwest to the New Mexico State line on the south. Also, there are an additional 101,926 acres of BLM-administered mineral estate managed by BLM in the resource area for a total of approximately 623,000 acres (Map 1-3).

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE BUREAU PLANNING SYSTEM

Development of a ROD/approved RMP occurs within the framework of the BLM planning system. The planning system is divided into three distinct tiers for operational purposes; policy planning, land use planning, and activity planning. The completion of this ROD/approved RMP along with the previously completed steps in the land use planning process (the draft RMP/EIS and proposed RMP/final EIS) satisfies the requirements for the land use tier of the Bureau planning system.

### DISTRIBUTION OF THE ROD/APPROVED RMP

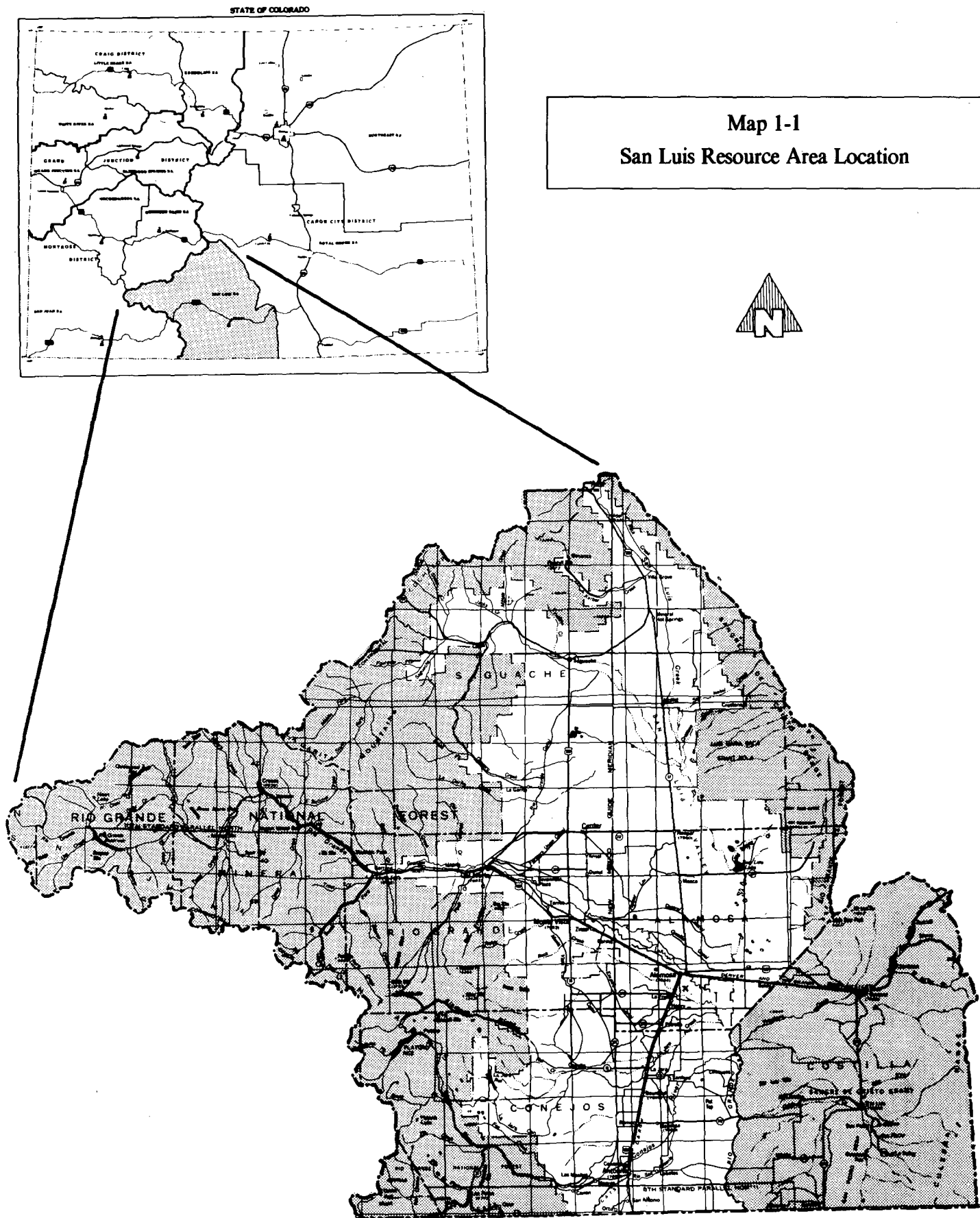
This ROD/approved RMP will be distributed to all individuals, groups, entities, companies, agencies, etc., who have been involved in the land use planning process. The mailing list of 799 names has been developed during the 5-year period since the preplan was approved in the fall of 1987 by recording all contacts with the public or governmental agencies. Also copies of this ROD/approved RMP will be provided on request in the future.

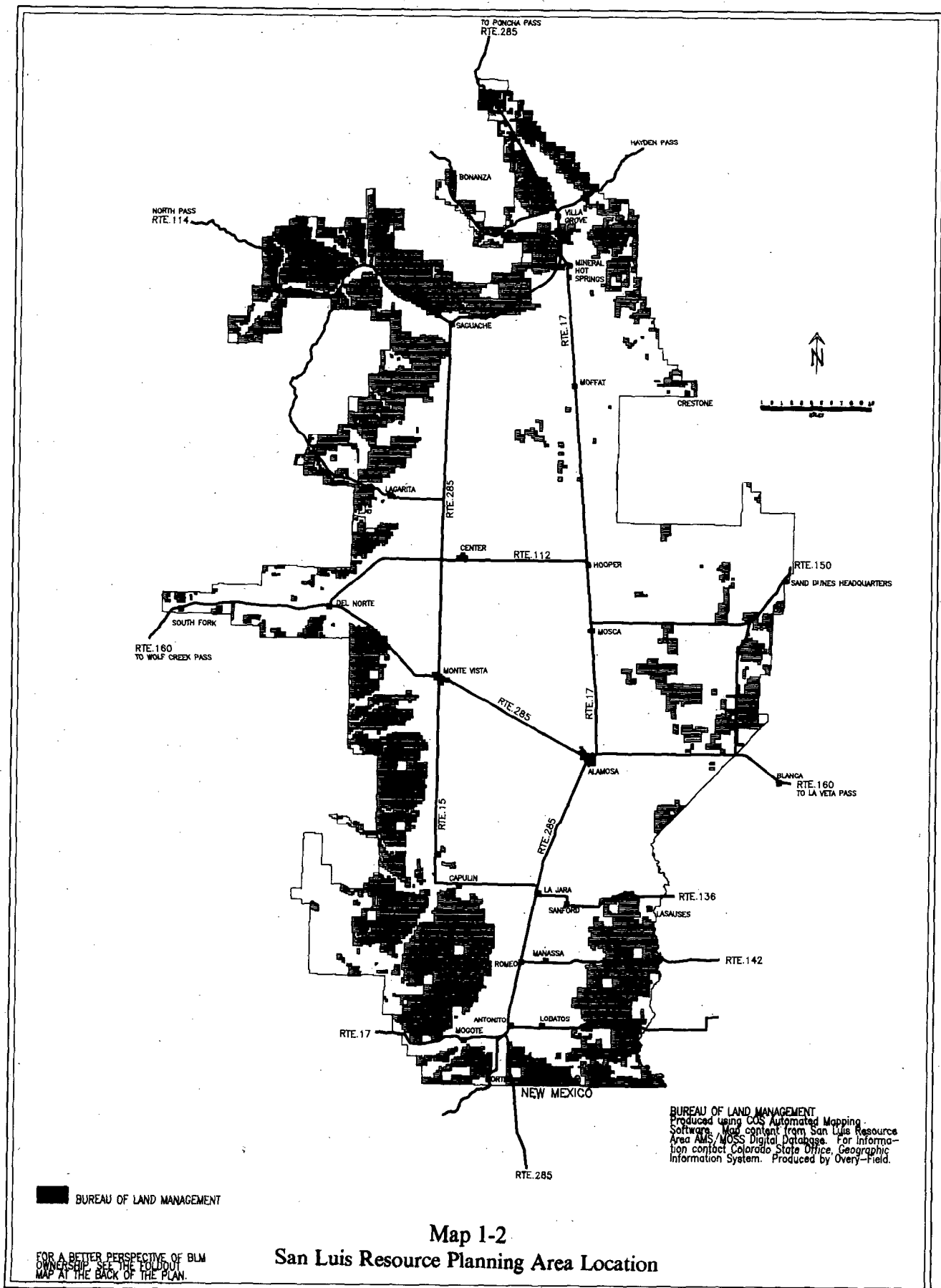
### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COORDINATION

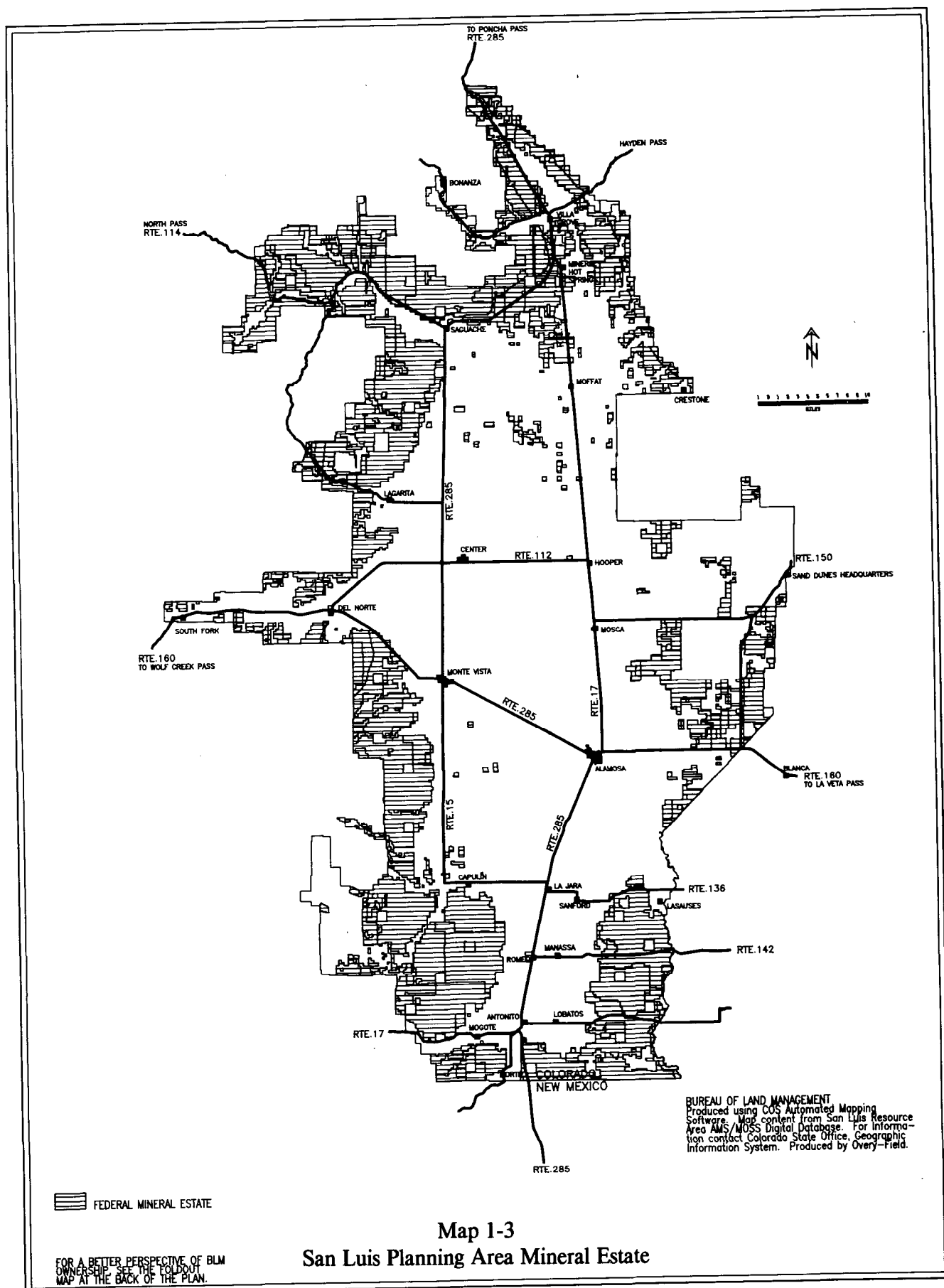
Throughout the planning process, concerns and interests of all publics were solicited and then addressed in a variety of formal and informal public participation activities. These involved various public meetings, several sets of workshops, many one-on-one meetings with individuals or specific entities, the establishment of and use of nine interest/input groups, public mailings of seven planning information bulletins and media news releases, coordination briefings with governmental agencies, and formal public hearings. If more in-depth information is desired, refer to Chapter 5 Public Involvement of the draft RMP/EIS and Chapter 2 Public Comments on the draft RMP/EIS in the proposed RMP/final EIS.

No formal protests were received on the proposed RMP/final EIS plan decisions.

Chapter 1







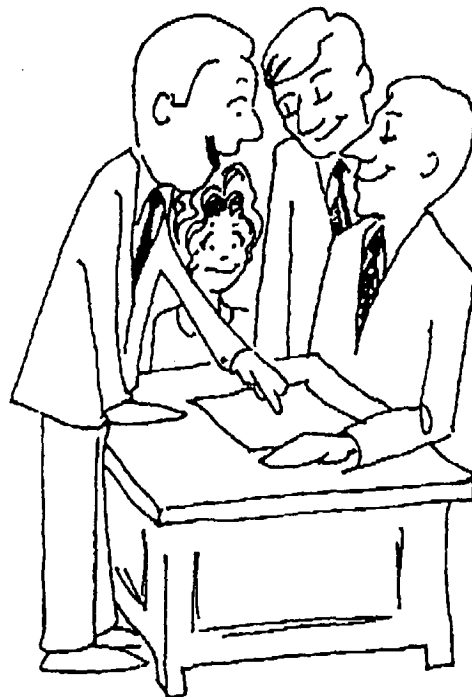
Concerns about the potential wild and scenic river designation for the Rio Grande River in the San Luis Valley, however, still exist. At a Cañon City District Advisory Council meeting in Cañon City on November 15, 1991, a motion was passed to support "...the designation of the Rio Grande River as a National Conservation Area without a Federal reserved water right. Such conservation area should recognize and protect the outstanding values of the Rio Grande River Canyon in Colorado." In another earlier advisory council meeting on April 14, 1990, in Alamosa, the council passed two resolutions relating to this issue. One resolution stated that BLM should not recommend any of the river corridor for potential wild and scenic river status in the RMP. The other resolution stated if there were to be a BLM wild and scenic river recommendation in the RMP that no Federal water reserve be made and only Rio Grande River Interstate Compact water deliveries be involved. The BLM Rio Grande River Wild and Scenic study team used this earlier input from the council in their revision of the river study report and BLM management took these council expressed concerns into consideration when they made their final RMP decision. The BLM management final decision endorses some form of "enduring protection" designation for this river corridor; national conservation area, wild and scenic river status, or some other Congressional designation. See decision number 9-6, under Rio Grande River Corridor Area #9, in Chapter 2 of this document for more information on this decision.

## IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING DECISIONS

Decisions in this plan will be implemented over a period of years and must be tied directly to the BLM budgeting process. An implementation schedule will be developed and signed by the district manager within 90 days of the signing of the ROD. This implementation schedule will provide for the systematic accomplishment of all decisions in the approved RMP. Decisions will be monitored continually to ensure the necessary tracking and subsequent integration into the budget system occur on a timely basis. An area staffer will be designated to accomplish decision monitoring and schedule implementation. All decisions will be reviewed quarterly at the resource area, and quarterly progress will be shared with the district. On an annual basis, a formal report will be sent from the district manager to the state director to determine whether or not correct decision implementing and monitoring are occurring. An effort will be made to fully comply with the "Colorado Plan User's Handbook," the Bureau 1617 Manual (Using the Resource Management Plan), and the H-1617-1 (Handbook for Using the Resource Management Plan).

## MAINTAINING AND AMENDING DECISIONS

Plan decisions will be maintained continuously to reflect minor changes in information. Maintenance is limited to refining or further clarifying a plan decision and cannot expand the scope nor change the terms or conditions of resource uses. An area staffer will be designated to maintain and monitor plan decisions and determine when and if plan amendments are necessary. Maintenance will be documented in supporting records as required by the "Colorado Plan Maintenance Guide." Plan decision amendments may become necessary if major changes are needed or if large quantities of minor changes occur. Amendments are prepared with public input and include environmental analyses.



# CHAPTER 2

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

The resource area is divided into 10 geographic reference areas (GRAs) as shown on the maps inserted in pockets in the back of this document. This section describes the base line decisions for the entire resource area and for the most part refers very specifically to each of the GRAs. Decisions within area #1 also are relevant to the other nine geographic reference areas unless specified otherwise within that particular GRA. Total acreage figures are in Chapter 1 of this document.

The decisions within this plan are organized into 10 GRAs and are displayed by resources/resource uses and by one of the following three decisions:

1. **Resource Condition Objective (RCO):** The desired state (condition) BLM would like to achieve for environmental values and social/economic conditions (resource) affected by BLM management activities and resource conditions (objectives) in a specific geographic location.
2. **Land Use Allocation (LUA):** The allowable, limited, or excluded uses (allocations) for a specific geographic location or area and the terms and conditions of such use.
3. **Management Action (MA):** The specific action/direction BLM will take to achieve RCO/LUA decisions.

The objective of this resource management plan is to provide a variety of levels, methods, and a mix of multiple use resource management, utilization, and protection. Management decisions are based on current policies, regulations, and the specific resource conditions, allocations, and management actions described in this plan. The four large fold-out maps, in the back of this document, depict the decisions presented in this chapter.

BLM lands and resources will continue to be managed to provide needed commodities and uses (e.g., livestock grazing, mineral materials sales, etc.) to assist in the support of local and regional economies. Generally, management practices and prescriptions will favor maintaining or enhancing the natural setting (e.g., wildlife habitat, visual resources, recreation areas, etc.). Specific emphasis will be to enhance dispersed recreation opportunities, wildlife habitats, and related values (e.g., riparian, recreation) and uses. Necessary constraints, stipulations, and mitigating measures will be included to protect these resources from irreversible damage.

## MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE COMMON TO ALL AREAS

The management guidance common to all GRAs described in this section by resources and resource uses are not carried into the specific decisions in the GRAs. They are, however, of significant concern to the Bureau. In most cases, the common measures described for these resources and resource uses reflect Bureau policies and regulatory mandates and, therefore, will be the same throughout the plan. Some resources and resource uses may be partially discussed both in this section and under the GRA discussions as specific decisions.

### Climate

Climatic variability throughout the planning area, and over time, affects the management options for several resources. Climatic conditions will be monitored and analyzed when appropriate. For example, rangeland vegetation condition assessments will analyze both climatic and grazing management, and mineral development plans will analyze both climatic and mineral development reclamation.

### Air Quality

Air quality degradation will be minimized through strict compliance with Federal, state, and local regulations and implementation plans. For example, air quality impacts from prescribed burns are limited by BLM Manual 7723 (Air Quality Maintenance Requirements), which requires a state-approved open burning permit prior to implementation. These impacts will be small in scale and dispersed throughout the planning area. Increasing off-highway vehicle (OHV) use in open areas might accelerate soil erosion and increase fugitive dust emissions; however, dust suppression control devices would not be practical. Additional management activities include monitoring, analysis, and impact mitigation on a project-specific basis, which will ensure compliance with applicable regulations and implementation plans.

### Soils

Surface-disturbing activities, including grazing, mineral development, forest and woodland harvest, and OHV use, might cause a very slight loss of watershed values

## Chapter 2

throughout the planning area during the life of the plan. Allotment grazing adjustments and standards with stipulations for other resource actions will decrease erosion and potentially enhance watershed characteristics for a net watershed value increase. Construction of transmission and communication facilities in designated utility corridors and communication sites might adversely affect soil on a short-term basis with very insignificant effects overall.

### Water Resources

Legal rights through the state water court system will be acquired to use water in support of BLM programs, including the water needs of BLM recreation areas and sites, commercial and concession facilities, special plant and animal habitat areas, state and local government recreation and public purposes lease areas, livestock management allotments, and wildlife habitat areas.

Water quality will continue to be maintained or improved in accordance with state and Federal standards. BLM will consult the appropriate state agencies on proposed projects that could significantly affect water quality. Management actions on BLM-administered land within municipal watersheds will continue to be designed to protect water quality and quantity.

The Bureau water use inventory and water rights program within the planning area will continue to be implemented. As new projects are completed and old ones are maintained, re-evaluating and updating will be required. Monitoring selected ground water and surface water stations will be continued in cooperation with USGS. Potential impacts to surface water resources are not as critical nor probable as to ground water resources.

In the event that reaches of the lower Rio Grande River are designated for special management under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, no Federal claims for instream flows are anticipated; however, an implicit Federal reserved water right is in the Act. Existing stream conditions are sufficient to satisfy the needs of any special management designation. Pending future designation, BLM may have to quantify needs and file in state water court.

Watershed activity plans will be developed and implemented on areas where livestock grazing plan adjustments will not fully correct any determined water quality problem. Cooperative management within the range program and the watershed program in the development, implementation, evaluation, and modification of AMPs as affected by watershed values will continue as a top priority.

Monitoring and evaluation of water quality and quantity, as well as control of erosion and sediment production, will remain high priority management goals. Emphasis will be to continue all watershed activities that provide protection,

maintenance, and enhancement of the watershed resources, including the support provided to other resource programs and activities.

The BLM in Colorado will continue to take an active role in the control of nonpoint source pollution on public lands. BLM is an active participant on the state of Colorado Nonpoint Source Taskforce and Agriculture/Silviculture Subcommittee. Through these organizations, BLM will identify nonpoint source pollution areas for the updating of the Colorado Nonpoint Assessment Report. It is the policy of BLM to protect, maintain, restore, and/or enhance the quality of waters on public lands. The implementation of best management practices will be utilized to help achieve this goal.

Funds will be requested for planning and project implementation for nonpoint source control with emphasis placed on the priority watersheds identified in the Colorado Nonpoint Source Management Program report. Nonpoint source control projects will be implemented as funding and manpower allow.

### Geology, Topography, and Minerals

Federal oil, gas, and geothermal mineral estate on both Federal and split-estate lands (Mineral Decisions Map in back of this document) will be open to leasing under standard lease terms with the exception of the following nondiscretionary closures:

1. Fluid mineral estate (320 acres) within the incorporated town of Del Norte, Colorado.
2. Fluid mineral estate (16,794 acres) within the wilderness study areas (WSAs) are closed to oil and gas leasing in accordance with section 43 of the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987 pending a final determination by Congress as to suitability for inclusion into the wilderness system. The recommendation of the Cañon City Final Wilderness EIS and the U. S. Forest Service study identifies 3,300 acres as suitable for recommendation as wilderness. The remaining 13,494 acres were recommended for return to multiple use management and, therefore, are assumed to be subject to the applicable leasing decisions of this plan. No lands within a WSA, however, will be considered for lease pending a final determination by Congress.

Wilderness designation of 3,300 acres of BLM lands contiguous to the Rio Grande National Forest will withdraw these lands from all forms of minerals appropriation subject to valid existing rights in accordance with Section 4(d)(3) of the Wilderness Act. Such designation will not result in any significant impacts to mineral resources because of the low mineral potential of these particular lands.



Other conditions for leasing, such as no surface occupancy (NSO) and seasonal stipulations, shown in Appendix C, of the proposed RMP/FEIS, are assigned as required by the management prescriptions; these special stipulations will apply to Federal surface and split-estate lands. The following fluid mineral estates will be subject to a no surface occupancy stipulation:

1. The unincorporated town of South Fork, Colorado (40 acres).
2. The park site under recreation and public purpose (R&PP) lease to the city of Monte Vista, Colorado (360 acres).
3. A portion of the Pike Stockade State Historic Park (840 acres).

These lands and improvements have been determined to be incompatible with any form of surface use by fluid mineral operations.

Resource information for fluid mineral estate, on which recommended stipulations are based, will be verified during review of applications for permit to drill (APD). Onsite inspection and consultation among BLM, surface owner, and operator may reveal that (1) the impacts addressed by the stipulation will be avoided and/or mitigated to an acceptable level or (2) the resources of concern are not present. Based on either of these determinations by the authorized officer (A.O.), the stipulations can be waived, modified, or excepted without public notice other than that required in the APD process.

Consultation with the private surface owner for split-estate lands will provide for consideration of private use of the surface to the fullest extent possible. If, after onsite inspection and consultation, the A.O. determines that conditions necessary to avoid impacts to private resources will adversely impact the public resources addressed by the lease stipulation, such impacts will be assessed. If, based on such an assessment, the A.O. makes a decision to substantially change or waive one or more stipulation, a 30-day public review period will be provided in addition to the public notice period required under normal APD review process.

Based on past exploration and future projections concerning fluid mineral activity, the reasonably foreseeable level of development within the planning area will involve a maximum of 10 APDs and 7 geophysical notice of intents (NOIs) per year. This level of activity will result in an estimated 40 acres of surface disturbance per year. A description of the typical fluid minerals operation and standard operating practices employed in the SLRA is provided in Appendix C of the proposed RMP/final EIS and the Oil and Geothermal Technical Report.

## Vegetation

Overall objectives will be to move toward good condition (late seral stage) based on site potential using grazing management. If necessary, vegetation manipulation practices or other techniques will also be used to aid in accomplishing this. Specific desired plant communities will be described in activity plans, if necessary, and in most cases will be a diverse community of grasses, shrubs, and forbs.

Overall trend, condition, and forage production will be expected to improve. Soil-disturbing activities will be mitigated with standard operating practices for rehabilitation of disturbed sites and grazing allotment adjustments. Manipulation of vegetation, although not proposed, will involve mechanical, chemical, and fire practices.

Site-specific planning and any needed NEPA documentation will be accomplished if a proposal were made during the life of this land use plan. Ecological site determinations will be completed for the planning area, which will include site-specific vegetative resource measures for all resource actions. Maintenance, improvement, and/or replacement of the vegetation resource would continue to be a priority concern in all actions.

## Livestock Grazing Management

Overall livestock grazing management reflects the 1978 San Luis Grazing Environmental Statement, which this document replaces. Livestock grazing will be managed on the 149 allotments or approximately 474,000 acres currently being grazed, and approximately 32,400 AUMs will be authorized annually for livestock use on these allotments. Adjustments in the actual AUMs will be authorized and made when climatic or other conditions warrant a temporary increase or decrease in livestock use. Temporary livestock grazing will be allowed, pending an environmental assessment (EA), on any newly acquired lands.

Presently there are approximately 42,000 acres unallotted to livestock grazing of which approximately 13,000 acres are presently considered unsuitable. Livestock grazing will be allowed on suitable lands as needed or requested. Other uses and conflicts will be considered prior to authorizing use. Lands considered unsuitable for grazing are shown on Map 2-7 of the draft RMP/EIS.

The 36 allotment management plans (AMPs) not implemented will continue to be reviewed and implemented as appropriate. The 59 AMPs currently fully implemented will be continued as necessary to meet present and future objectives. Typical range improvements are listed in Appendix D of the proposed RMP/final EIS. The extent, location, and timing of such improvements are described in AMPs. The highest priority for implementation generally will be as-

signed to those improvements for which total anticipated benefits exceed costs. Funding would be from contributions from various sources including operators and BLM.

New range improvements will be constructed if needed to achieve AMP objectives and/or implement the grazing management programs prescribed in the AMPs. Manipulation of vegetation can be used if needed to meet management objectives.

All grazing allotments in the planning area have been assigned to one of three management categories. The "M" category allotments generally will be managed to sustain current satisfactory resource conditions; "I" allotments generally will be managed to improve resource conditions; and "C" allotments will receive custodial management for existing resource values. These categories are based on the allotment resource characteristics, potential opportunities, and needs. Appendix D of the proposed RMP/final EIS shows the specific allotments and categories. Allotments may be moved from one category to another as new information becomes available, resource conditions change, or management activities are implemented. Changes will be documented showing the basis for the change.

Monitoring studies will be continued or established on all allotments. Allotment categorization will determine the monitoring intensity with the "I" category receiving the highest intensity of monitoring studies. The specific type of studies will be determined by the AMP objectives. As a minimum, condition and trend studies will be established in accordance with the MI Public Rangeland Improvement Act D of 1978.

If monitoring studies show that livestock use changes are necessary to achieve established management objectives, corrective action will be taken. Livestock use adjustments are most often made by changing one or more of the following: class of livestock, season of use, stocking rate, or the grazing management system. Although most livestock use adjustments will occur in the "I" allotments, use adjustments could occur in the "C" and "M" allotments. Changes can be made with an EA and AMP revision.

Types of grazing systems to be implemented are described in Appendix D of the proposed RMP/final EIS and are normally implemented by an AMP; however, they will likely be incorporated in a coordinated resource management activity plan (CRMAP) if feasible. AMPs are generally prepared in consultation, cooperation, and coordination with the permittee and other affected interested parties to meet multiple use and land use plan objectives. Permittee requested changes on current grazing management could be made with an EA.

## Wildlife and Fish Habitat Management

All BLM-administered lands (520,677 acres) will be considered for protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat values. Monitoring Blanca and Trickle Mountain Habitat Management Areas and crucial big game winter range, birthing areas, and raptor sites will continue.

Existing stream fisheries will be maintained. Improvements in condition and stability will be accomplished through the riparian programs where the potential exists. Cooperative agreements for wildlife habitat management projects will be pursued with other state and Federal agencies and other interested individuals.

Supplemental releases and re-introduction of native or naturalized fish and wildlife species (excluding Federal or state listed endangered, threatened, candidate, or sensitive species) could be authorized by the manager following environmental analysis.

## Lands and Realty Management

Lands actions (e.g., sale, exchange, recreation and public purpose leases, etc.) on BLM-administered lands are generally initiated by the public and on an infrequent basis. Most of these lands in the SLRA (see Realty Action Decisions Map in the back of this document) are in large blocks and have important resource values. Most of these lands, therefore, will continue to be administered by BLM, and only a small portion will be considered for disposal.

Lands have been placed in two categories:

*Category I* lands will be disposal tracts. These tracts (5,300 acres) are shown on the Realty Action Decisions Map in the back of this document. Although these lands meet the criteria for public sale consistent with the provisions of Section 203 of FLPMA, other methods of disposal will not be precluded. Land acquisitions will generally not be considered in these areas.

*Category II* lands will be available for disposal on a case-by-case basis for the purpose of minor boundary adjustments on lands administered by BLM, enhance public resource values, state indemnity selections, Recreation and Public Purposes Act applications, or other appropriate statutory authority, if disposal serves the national interest. Land acquisitions will be considered in these areas; however, land exchanges are the preferred method for ownership adjustments. Exchanges will be considered in these areas if the exchange results in a consolidated land ownership pattern, improved manageability of natural resources, or otherwise will be in the public interest. All land actions in this category will be consistent with the provisions of FLPMA.

Acquisition of lands will also result in a consolidated land ownership pattern, improved manageability of natural resources, protection or enhancement of sensitive resources (e.g., special plant and animal values, crucial wildlife winter range, riparian areas, public commercial timber, grazing, minerals, etc.), and enhancement of other BLM-administered land values. Acquisition zones (Realty Action Decisions Map in the back of this document) are non-Federal land and have been identified for acquisition only from willing landowners or agencies by exchange or purchase at fair market value to satisfy public interests previously noted.

### Wilderness Management

The WSAs will be managed under BLM Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP) until Congress makes a decision on wilderness recommendations in the Cañon City District. In accordance with Section 603 of FLPMA, BLM is required to manage all identified wilderness study areas under the non-impairment mandate. This mandate restricts any uses/development of the WSAs, which would make them unsuitable for wilderness designation. Valid existing rights must be recognized and are an exception to the nonimpairment mandate. Those grazing, mining, and mineral leasing uses existing when FLPMA was approved on October 21, 1976, may continue in the same manner and degree as on that date, even if the use will impair wilderness suitability.

Mining operations occurring as of October 21, 1976, may continue in the same manner and degree as long as they do not cause unnecessary or undue degradation. Mining operations proposed after this date, however, are subject to the nonimpairment requirements for all operations proposed.

An interagency agreement between the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and BLM dated February 20, 1981, provided for the joint study of adjoining areas and designated the USFS as the lead agency in the study. A proposal has been made to Congress recommending 3,300 acres of contiguous BLM wilderness study areas (Black Canyon, South Piney Creek, Papa Keal, and Zapata Creek WSAs) suitable for wilderness designation. In the event that Congress releases any of these areas from further wilderness consideration, management prescriptions identified in this plan will be followed.

Two other designated BLM WSAs (Sand Castle and San Luis Hills) will be managed in accordance with BLM and congressional directives. These WSAs, which are not recommended by BLM for wilderness designation in the Final Cañon City District Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement dated December 1987, would be returned to other multiple use management, as ACECs, if released by Congress from further wilderness consideration.

### Access and Transportation Management

At the time the RMP is implemented, access and transportation services will be planned in detail as a portion of an area-wide support services management plan (SSMP). Four-wheel drive use will be limited seasonally on 25 roads to protect muddy nonsurfaced roads. The specific differences in numbers, kinds, and lengths of transportation developments and exact locations and sizes of access needs cannot be described until the SSMP is complete. This plan will detail roads, trails, engineering requirements, acquisition, withdrawals, points of access, etc., for final land use plan implementation. Specific access and transportation decisions, therefore, will not be presented.

### Historical Resources

All 39 historical sites will receive minimal legal protection. Historical resources will be inventoried as appropriate, and clearances will be conducted on all sites with any proposed surface-disturbing activities. Measures designed to protect 18 significant historical resources will be required in all land use activity plans. The Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) site, will receive special protective management.

### Fire Management

Any fire, including wildfires, occurring in the resource area will be suppressed. No conditional suppression areas with special fire condition values, such as ACECs or SRMAs are considered in this plan. This fire management decision has been carried into the RMP because of the extremely low historical fire occurrence and the low intensity of wildfires in the the planning area (i.e., 1.7 fires per 10-year period and less than 1.6 acres in size). This full suppression does include the wilderness study areas, areas highly susceptible to soil erosion, special plant and animal management areas, and areas of critical environmental concern within the resource area. This decision is inconsistent with the Cañon City District Fire Management Activity Plan. The activity plan will be modified to reflect this full suppression scenario during the first 2 years of RMP implementation and subsequently evaluated annually to make necessary changes as needed.

Prescribed burn plans and necessary NEPA documentation will be written for areas requiring visual landscape or vegetation manipulation; however, no specific areas are identified at this time.

### Hazards Management

Hazard sites/areas will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Management of other resources will always involve the needed reclamation of known hazard sites/areas as part of fulfilling objectives for management of that resource. On completion of this plan, hazard reclamation activities for known sites/areas will be developed as a portion of the area-wide support services management activity plan. If the known hazard site is in or adjacent to an area where a coordinated resource management activity plan (CRMAP) is to be done, the reclamation activity plan will be combined with that CRMAP.

Sites/areas from past mineral development, potentially hazardous because of high side walls, deep pits, etc., will probably remain until the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Hazard abatement project is completed. The goal of this long-term project is to eliminate the hazards of these sites/areas, and BLM will continue to fully cooperate with this agency in this effort.

The Bureau will continue to control trespass dumping on BLM lands through increasing public awareness, signing, and monitoring. These reclamation activities will be detailed in the area-wide support services management plan and will provide the specifics as to onsite closures, signing, site reclamation needs, etc., to implement hazard abatement.

### Special Status Plant and Animal Species

Threatened and endangered species and sensitive species and plant communities will be inventoried and monitored as necessary to provide information for proper management.

Supplemental releases and reintroduction of Federal and state listed endangered, threatened, candidate, and sensitive species will be enacted following environmental analysis and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW), Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP), and other affected parties.

### Waterpower/Storage

Those potential waterpower/storage reservoir sites under a land withdrawal will continue to be maintained for waterpower values. The exception will be the waterpower/storage site withdrawals within the 22-mile portion of the Rio Grande River Corridor, which was determined eligible and suitable for wild and scenic river designation. These

withdrawals are recommended for termination if this portion is designated wild and scenic by Congress.

Before any uses will be allowed that might endanger waterpower values, an engineering evaluation will be prepared to determine whether the land has waterpower value. A letter will then be sent to FERC requesting their concurrence to modify or terminate the withdrawal to allow for compatible uses.

Potential sites not presently withdrawn will be identified and restrictively managed for waterpower/storage sites. Unnecessary uses that might endanger the waterpower or reservoir values will be avoided. Before any uses will be allowed that might endanger the waterpower or storage values, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will be contacted to determine whether the site is still not withdrawn. Sites will continue to be identified, investigated, evaluated, and recommended for withdrawal as needed.

## DECISIONS

### San Luis Area #1

Area #1 includes all areas not designated as an area of special concern.

This area includes all BLM-administered surface lands (389,297 acres) and subsurface lands (489,620 acres) outside the other nine areas.

### Minerals

#### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

1-1: Application of seasonal stipulations on approximately 342,000 acres from December 15 to March 31 of each year to protect big game crucial winter range and eagle wintering areas throughout the planning area. Seasonal stipulations will apply from May 15 until July 15 on antelope birthing areas. Operations might be allowed in seasonally limited areas during these periods if no more than minimal disturbance to wildlife would occur.

1-2: Application of seasonal limitations could be incorporated into authorizations, if necessary, to protect waterfowl nesting areas.

#### Land Use Allocation Decisions

1-1: Oil and gas operations would not be allowed in riparian zones.

**1-2:** Federal oil, gas, and geothermal resources on 487,620 acres or 99.7 percent of BLM-administered lands or mineral estate will be open to leasing. No surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations will protect 1,200 acres within the Pike Stockade/Monte Vista park areas, 560 acres of eligible NRHP sites, and 40 acres of the unincorporated town of South Fork.

**1-3:** Federal mineral estate on approximately 483,980 acres (99 percent) will be open to entry and location. Mineral entry will be precluded on 1,200 acres within the Pike Stockade/Monte Vista park areas, 200 acres of U. S. Forest Service administrative sites, and 560 acres of eligible NRHP sites.

**1-4:** Federal mineral estate will be open on 486,240 acres (99 percent) and will be available for disposal of mineral materials except in riparian zones.

### **Management Action Decisions**

**1-1:** Require plan of operations for mineral development except casual use in the following locations: a) areas closed to OHV; b) acres designated for potential addition to or actual components of the national wild and scenic river site; c) designated areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs); and d) areas withdrawn from operations of the mining laws in which valid existing rights are being exercised.

**1-2:** Continue to inventory mineral material disposal resources and develop appropriate common use areas and community pits.

## **Paleontological Resources**

### **Land Use Allocation Decision**

**1-5:** A collection area for invertebrate fossils near Clayton Cone will be identified and coordinated with the recreation program.

### **Management Action Decisions**

**1-3:** Complete a site-specific management plan for the collection area near Clayton Cone. An area-wide surface-disturbance development plan will be completed.

**1-4:** Continue to inventory paleontological resources and develop appropriate protective measures/stipulations for surface-disturbing proposals.

## **Riparian Resources Management**

### **Resource Condition Objective Decisions**

**1-3:** Maintain approximately 1,400 acres of riparian zones in good to excellent condition and improve condition on 455 acres.

Protection measures will include, but are not limited to, 1) mitigation of impacts from rights-of-way and utility corridors adjacent to or that cross riparian areas; 2) provision for no disposal of mineral materials in riparian zones; 3) limited OHV designations in riparian zones.

Enhancement measures will include, but are not limited to, 1) increased emphasis on the acquisition program and allow no disposal of riparian areas except through land exchanges; 2) modified allotment management plans (AMPs) to increase emphasis on riparian resources; and 3) management of the riparian resources in the Blanca WHA to continue primary emphasis on wetlands management and waterfowl production.

### **Management Action Decision**

**1-5:** Complete an inventory on an additional 1,413 acres with potential riparian values. If riparian values are present, the resource will be managed according to Resource Condition Objective 1-3.

## **Vegetation**

### **Resource Condition Objective Decisions**

**1-4:** Maintain the present good to excellent range condition; move toward good condition (late seral stage) on the fair to poor condition range based on site potential. Specific desired plant communities will be described in activity plans, if necessary.

**1-5:** Allow vegetative manipulation such as mechanical, chemical, or fire practices to aid in accomplishing the overall objective and the desired plant communities described in activity plans.

### **Management Action Decision**

**1-6:** Continue the ecological site inventory to provide data for existing ecological status and trend and aid in developing vegetative objectives and desired plant community descriptions for activity plans.

### Livestock Grazing Management

#### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

1-6: Continue the 59 fully implemented AMPs, if necessary to meet present and future objectives, and continue to review and implement the 36 allotment management plans not implemented.

1-7: Provide 40 percent of increased forage production to livestock grazing and 60 percent, if needed, to nonlivestock uses and needs (e. g. , wildlife, riparian, watershed, soils , etc.).

1-8: Monitor all grazing areas and take appropriate methods to accomplish the following:

1. Enhance riparian values in applicable allotments through proper livestock management.
2. Ensure that livestock use will be appropriately managed to enhance the affected habitat where special status plants and animals are present.
3. Ensure that other RMP objectives will be met in other allotments.

1-9: Allow livestock grazing year around based on the following criteria:

1. Objectives of the AMPs, HMPs, CRMAs, etc., are met.
2. No conflict with crucial wildlife use or conflict can be mitigated.
3. Early spring use (3/1 to 4/30) could be allowed for special management prescriptions.

#### Land Use Allocation Decisions

1-6: Continue authorizing approximately 32,400 AUMs annually for livestock grazing on the existing grazed allotments or approximately 474,000 acres. Refer to Appendix D, Table D-1 in the draft RMP/EIS for specific allotments.

1-7: Consider allocating 1,500 AUMs for livestock grazing in the presently unallotted acres (approximately 30,000 acres) that are suitable for grazing (see Map 2-4, draft RMP/EIS).

#### Management Action Decision

1-7: Construct new range improvements, if needed, to achieve AMP objectives and/or implement the grazing programs prescribed in the AMPs. Manipulation of vegetation will be used, if needed, to meet management objectives.

### Wildlife and Fish Habitat Management

#### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

1-10: Manage the wetland component of the riparian system in a good to excellent condition.

1-11: Manage streams to maintain the fisheries potential.

1-12: Provide special management to improve the present acres of wetlands in the Mishak Lakes and Dry Lakes areas to the historical acres of wetlands.

1-13: Maintain 48,500 AUMs for big game. Crucial winter ranges will be managed to sustain available winter forage for 17,600 big game animals.

1-14: Plan implementation of construction projects for other resource management programs at times of the year compatible with wildlife.

#### Land Use Allocation Decision

1-8: Seasonal use limitations will be considered if needed on water bird nesting habitat associated with wetlands. Seasonal limitation could vary from year to year, depending on target species.

### Forest and Woodland Management

#### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

1-15: Meet crucial thermal and cover requirements for wildlife during harvest of productive forest lands and operable woodlands.

1-16: Allow small timber operations (i.e., 80 acres or less) during the winter months provided there will be only minimal impacts to wintering big game herds. The impact analysis for proposed timber sales will consider not only BLM-administered lands, but also adjacent USFS lands with approved prescriptions in the Rio Grande Forest Management Plan.

1-17: Harvest 185 Mbf (5,769 acres of operable commercial forest lands) annually during the life of the plan. Thirty-four acres of CFL will be replaced annually through regeneration harvest. Harvest 477 cords of fuelwood (11,992 acres of productive operable woodlands) during the life of the plan or 53 acres annually.

## Land Use Allocation Decision

1-9: Allow harvesting in any area consistent with activity plans and RMP decisions.

## Lands and Realty Management

### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

1-18: Establish priority for access using the following criteria:

1. Access easements that will jointly benefit BLM and other resource agency programs.
2. Access needs identified in coordinated resource management activity plans (CRMAP).
3. Scenic/recreational access easements along river corridors for recreation, wildlife, riparian, and other resource values.
4. Other access needs based on the following: a) resource values (quantity and quality); b) potential for closure to the public; c) resource conflict mitigation; d) public demand and BLM administrative needs; e) configuration (size, shape and amount of public land); f) proximity to population centers; and g) proximity to major travel routes.

1-19: Promote maximum utilization of existing ROWs, including joint use when possible.

1-20: Emphasize retention and management of the majority (probably more than 95 percent) of BLM-administered lands in the planning area.

1-21: The priority criteria for acquisitions of new lands are: 1) riparian (e.g., wetlands, perennial streams, etc.); 2) habitat for special status animal species and areas with special status plant species; 3) recreation use sites adjacent to water areas; 4) wildlife habitat; 5) access; and 6) lands to improve overall manageability. Some potential zones of acquisitions have been tentatively identified on the Realty Action Decisions Map at the back of this document.

1-22: Land disposal of the scattered parcels in the San Luis Lakes and Mishak Lakes area will be limited to agencies or entities (Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Trout Unlimited, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nature Conservancy, National Park Service, etc.) with an interest in the maintenance or enhancement of the potential riparian/wetland values.

## Land Use Allocation Decisions

1-10: Land disposals will occur under the Category I criteria of FLPMA. Disposal of approximately 5,300 acres shown on the realty map in the back of the document will occur through sales or other methods.

1-11: Land disposals can occur through other methods under Category II criteria. Approximately 352,000 acres, shown on the realty map in the back of this document, will be available for potential disposal if it is determined to be in the public interest. Category II lands, if reviewed on a case-by-case basis and determined to meet Section 203 criteria and would serve the public interest, could also be available for sale.

1-12: Land disposal will not occur in the designated ACECs, WSAs, and SRMAs within the planning area; disposal of lands with riparian values will only be allowed through exchange, unless excepted in other decisions.

1-13: Existing withdrawals will be retained.

1-14: New withdrawals will be recommended to protect the five NRHP sites (approximately 560 acres).

1-15: Utility corridor routes, identified by the Western Utility Group (WUG) and included in the Rio Grande Forest Plan, are adopted with three exceptions.

1. No utility corridor from the Poncha Pass corridor west to Middle Creek (near Saguache) to Del Norte. This area has many acres of crucial winter wildlife habitat, is highly scenic, and is an important dispersed recreation area. Any expansion of utility use in the Poncha Pass corridor will be analyzed thoroughly under the NEPA process.

2. No utility corridor from New Mexico State line up along the Rio Grande River to Alamosa. Future powerlines proposed into Colorado from New Mexico will be routed outside the Rio Grande River Corridor.

3. No major utility corridors will be allowed in existing ACECs.

1-16: Any impacts from ROWs adjacent to or that cross riparian areas will be mitigated.

1-17: All other BLM lands will be open to rights-of-way for other utility lines, roads, etc., and each will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for alignment and mitigation stipulations.

## Chapter 2

### Management Action Decision

1-8: Identify and designate access corridors through BLM-administered lands at the time the support services management plan (SSMP) is completed.

### Recreation Management

#### Resource Condition Objective Decision

1-23: Allow continued dispersed recreational opportunities on BLM-administered lands.

1-24: Provide special management in areas with significant recreation potential and increased use; e.g., Penitente Canyon, Zapata Falls, etc.

#### Land Use Allocation Decisions

1-18: Two areas of special concern are designated within area #1; the Penitente Canyon Special Recreation Management Area (7,529 acres) and the Zapata Falls Special Recreation Management Area (6,302 acres). These 13,831 acres will be managed for intensive recreation.

1-19: A total of 375,466 acres of BLM-administered lands will be managed for extensive recreation in area #1.

1-20: The majority of BLM-administered land in area #1 will be designated as open or limited (seasonal, designated roads and trails, etc.) to vehicular travel. The public will be encouraged through an awareness program to stay on roads to protect environmental values. The only areas closed to vehicular travel will be the recommended wilderness areas. Designated corridors that lead to U.S. Forest Service, state, and private lands will be identified in the support services management plan (SSMP) for use during the limited period.

1-21: Crucial big game winter and birthing areas will be designated as limited (seasonal) for OHV use.

### Management Action Decision

1-9: Develop public awareness and public interpretative programs to focus on user ethics, sensitive resource values, information brochures, signing, etc., for cultural, and wildlife, recreational opportunities. Provide dispersed watchable wildlife opportunity sites and sites to interpret special status plant values. These efforts will primarily be a recreation program, but cooperation from the other resources will be needed.

1-10: Develop facilities in Penitente Canyon to accommodate increasing recreation use, including restrooms, parking, and primitive camping.

1-11: Develop an activity plan focusing on management needs to accommodate growing recreation use, especially rock climbing, but also protect resource values.

1-12: Pursue acquisition of state and private lands within the Zapata Falls SRMA.

1-13: Develop an activity plan for Zapata Falls SRMA focusing on improved access to the falls and needed facilities including day use, interpretive signing, etc.

### Visual Resource Management

#### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

1-25: Manage visual resource values on public lands to conform to current VRM inventory class objectives with one exception listed in Land Use Allocation Decision #1-22.

1-26: Manage the Blanca Peak chaining, striving towards a class III objective.

#### Land Use Allocation Decision

1-22: Public lands to the west of U. S. Highway 285 will be managed according to VRM Class III objectives to allow for a major utility corridor.

### Historical Resources

#### Resource Condition Objective Decision

1-27: Manage 18 historical sites on BLM lands for protection from adverse impacts of other resources.

#### Land Use Allocation Decision

1-23: Five eligible national register sites (560 acres) will be protected; e.g., remain in public ownership, closed to OHV, withdrawn from mineral entry, leased with NSO stipulation, limit access for administrative use, etc.

### Management Action Decisions

1-14: Prepare CRMPs for these five significant sites as a part of the National Register of Historic Places nominating process. They will be available for the following use categories: "scientific use," "public use," and "management use."

1-15: Prepare a valley-wide CRMP for the 13 sites (620 acres) not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and manage these sites according to this activity plan.



## Archaeological Resources

### Resource Condition Objective Decision

1-28: Manage all significant archaeological sites for protection from adverse impacts of other resources.

### Management Action Decisions

1-16: Complete specific CRMPs on those sites (i.e., Punche Valley, Dry Creek, etc.) eligible for inclusion on the national register, either as a national site, a national district, or a noncontiguous district.

1-17: Complete a valley-wide CRMP on those sites not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP and areas remaining to be inventoried.

1-18: Provide selected parts of various sites for public education and scientific purposes as specified in the valley-wide CRMP, a site-specific CRMP, or a CRMAP.

## Special Status Plant and Animal Values

### Resource Condition Objective Decision

1-29: Provide management to enhance, recover, or re-establish special status plant and animal values.

## Waterpower/Storage

### Resource Condition Objective Decision

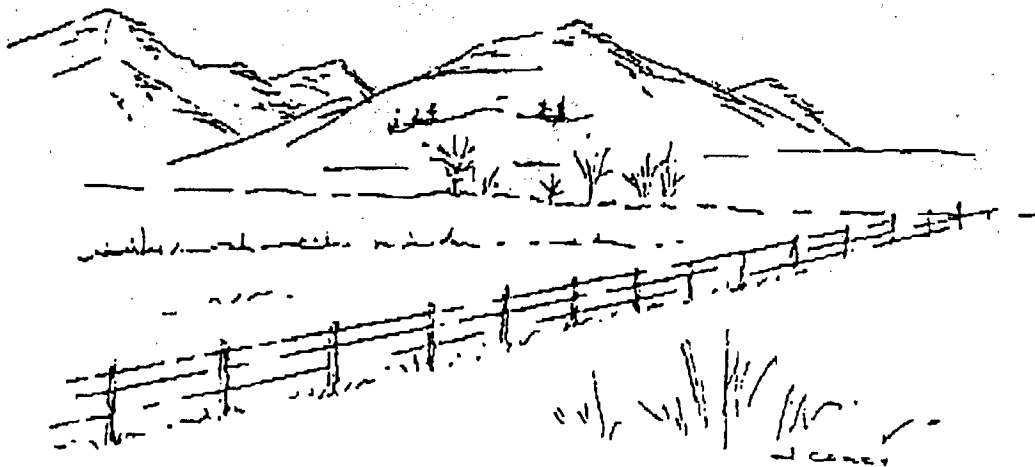
1-30: Continue maintenance of the physical potential for the development of waterpower/storage.

### Management Action Decisions

1-19: Evaluate and weigh potential waterpower/storage values of all sites prior to rejecting possible land acquisitions.

1-20: Evaluate sites not withdrawn, and if warranted, pursue opportunities for acquiring the land and recommend any affected land for withdrawal.

1-21: Develop measures to be included in FERC licenses to mitigate other resources in areas where other resources are in conflict with undeveloped sites.



### Trickle Mountain Area #2

All decisions under area #1 will apply here unless otherwise stated. Area #2 contains 44,521 acres of BLM-administered lands.

#### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

2-1: Provide special management to protect and enhance special wildlife values (multiple overlapping and intensive big game winter use), other significant natural values, and special status plant values.

#### Land Use Allocation Decisions

2-1: This area, including the Ford Creek Riparian Area and existing WHA, will be designated as an ACEC.

2-2: Five bighorn sheep lambing ranges and special status values (6,260 acres) will be protected by NSO and disposal

stipulations. Other crucial wildlife habitat will be protected through no disposal stipulations and seasonal limitations.

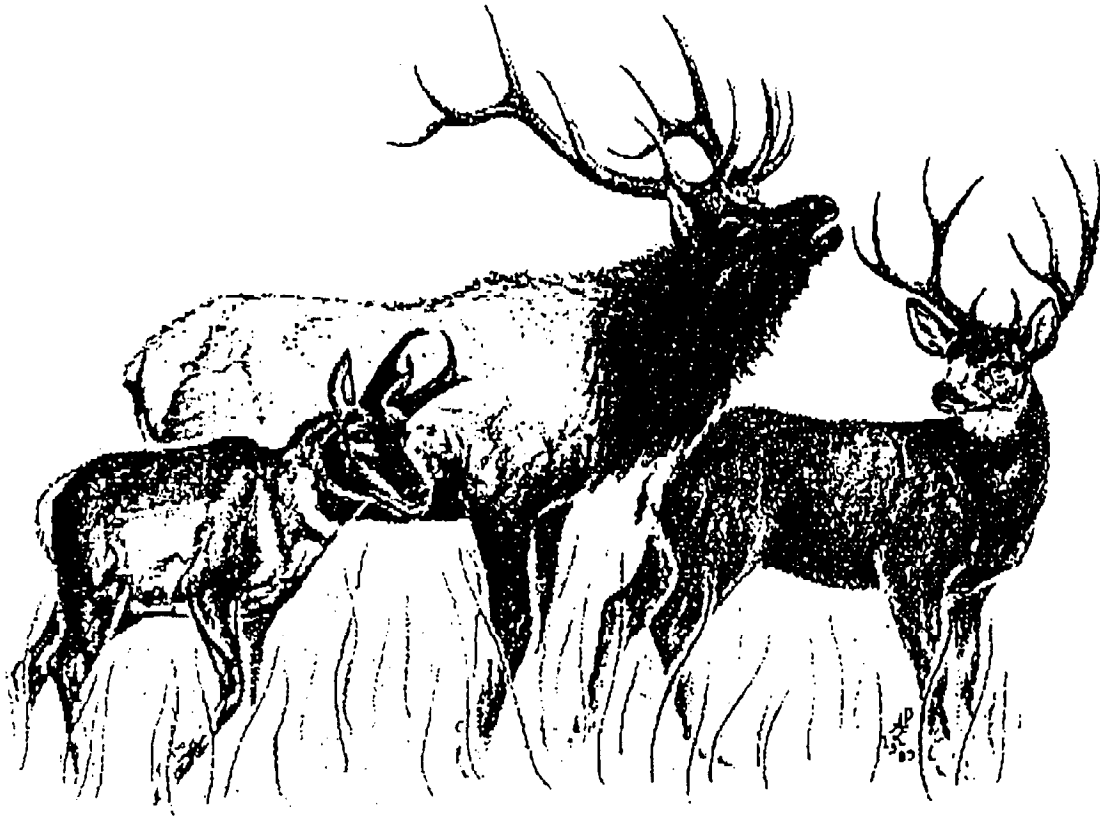
2-3: Application of seasonal limitations on timber cutting in bighorn sheep lambing range (6,260 acres).

2-4: Application of limited OHV use, and all travel at other times will be limited to designated roads and trails within this ACEC and per the CRMAP. The existing OHV plan will remain in place until a CRMAP is completed.

#### Management Action Decision

2-1: Continue the riparian demonstration project on Ford Creek.

2-2: Develop CRMAP emphasizing crucial winter and birthing habitats as priority objectives and addressing special status animals and plants.



### Sand Castle Area #3

All decisions in area #1 will apply here unless otherwise stated. Area #3 contains 3,595 acres of BLM-administered lands.

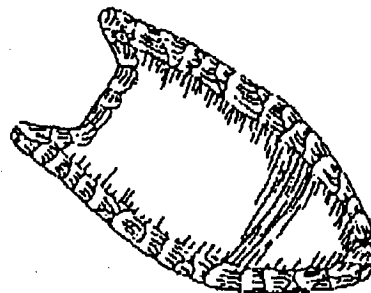
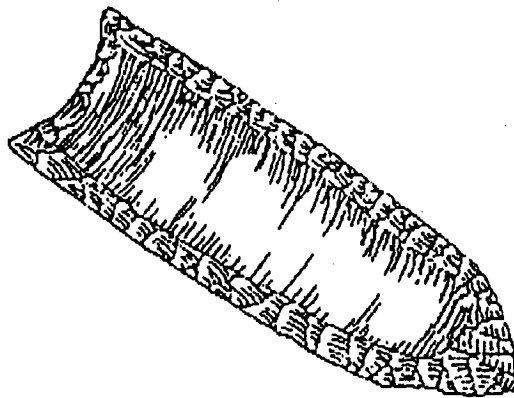
#### Resource Condition Objective Decision

3-1: Provide special management to protect the cultural and ecological resources within the Sand Castle area, with emphasis on the 200-acre "Folsom" archaeological site.

roads and trails identified in the CRMAP, which will also determine specific measures that may be taken to manage those potential impacts caused from OHV riding on roads and trails. Until the CRMAP is complete, travel will be limited to existing roads and trails.

3-3: Locatable mineral entry will be precluded and a new protective withdrawal would be placed on the 200-acre Folsom site in this ACEC.

3-4: A no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation for fluid minerals management will be placed on the 200-acre Folsom site in this ACEC.



#### Land Use Allocation Decisions

3-1: ACEC designation will provide protection for the significant cultural and ecological values.

3-2: The area is designated as a limited OHV area. Travel within the Sand Castle area will be restricted to designated

#### Management Action Decision

3-1: Complete a CRMAP for the area with emphasis on the protection of significant cultural and ecological values.

### Blanca Area #4

All decisions in area #1 will apply here unless otherwise stated. Area #4 contains 9,147 acres of BLM-administered land.

#### Resource Condition Objective Decision

4-1: Provide special management to maintain and improve wetlands for waterfowl production in the area, maintain 1,600 acres of wetlands, and enhance an additional 1,175 acres of historical wetlands. Recreation emphasis will be placed on warm water fisheries and watchable wildlife-related values.

#### Land Use Allocation Decisions

4-1: The area is designated as an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) and a special recreation management area (SRMA). This area will be managed with a strong emphasis on wildlife management and public recreation opportunities. Recreation objectives for the Blanca SRMA will be to enhance opportunities for fishing, viewing wildlife, waterfowl hunting, upland game hunting, and other day-use

recreation. Since recreation opportunities are dependent on wildlife values, these values will be enhanced and protected.

4-2: Locatable mineral entry will be precluded in this area.

4-3: Limited OHV designations (seasonal limitations and travel restricted to designated roads and trails as per the CRMAP) will maintain and protect significant values. Until the CRMAP is complete, travel will be limited to existing roads and trails.

4-4: Protect waterfowl nesting and water bird nesting habitat in the ACEC with seasonal limitations from February 15 to July 15.

#### Management Action Decisions

4-1: Complete a CRMAP with specific emphasis on blending the existing Blanca HMP into the additional recreational objectives now existing for this area and opening a portion of the area for wildlife viewing opportunities during the limited closure. Recreation objectives will conform to the existing site-specific guidance within the Blanca HMP.



## Elephant Rocks Area #5

All decisions in area #1 will apply here unless otherwise stated. Area #5 contains 1,852 acres of BLM-administered land.

### Resource Condition Objective Decision

5-1: Provide special management to protect unique geological, scenic, visual, special status plant values, recreation, and other significant natural resource values.

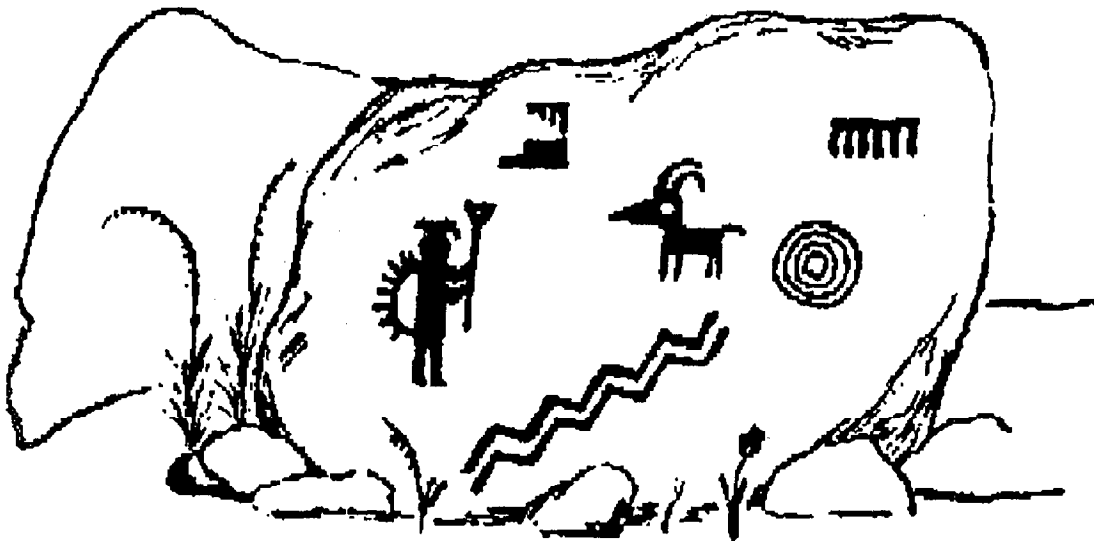
### Land Use Allocation Decisions

5-1: ACEC designation will provide protection for the unique geological, scenic, visual, special status plant values, recreation, and other significant natural resource values.

5-2: Limited OHV designations (seasonal limitations and travel restricted to designated roads and trails as per the CRMAP) will maintain and protect significant values. Until the CRMAP is complete, travel will be limited to existing roads and trails.

### Management Action Decision

5-1: Complete a CRMAP for the Elephant Rocks ACEC and address those special status plant values to be protected. Portions of the Penitente SRMA overlap this ACEC and these recreation objectives will be considered in the Elephant Rocks CRMAP.



## Chapter 2

### Ra Jadero Canyon #6

All decisions in area #1 will apply here unless otherwise stated. Area #6 contains 3,632 acres of BLM-administered lands.

#### Resource Condition Objective Decision

6-1: Provide special management to protect the unique special status plant values and other significant natural resources.

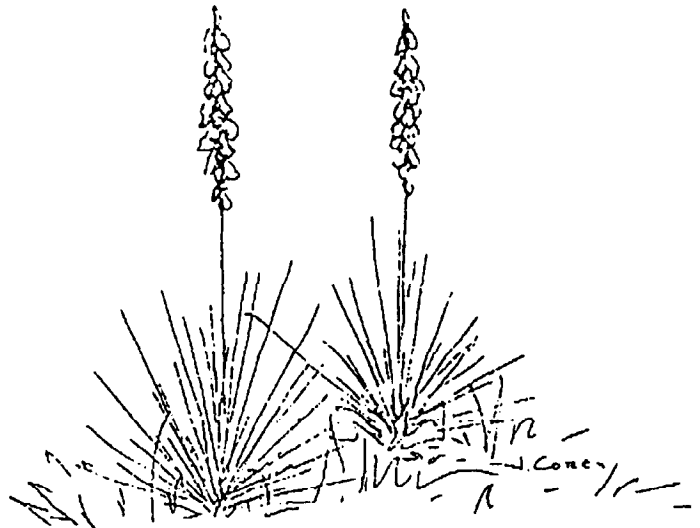
#### Land Use Allocation Decisions

6-1: ACEC designation will provide protection for the unique special status plant values and other significant natural resource values.

6-2: Limited OHV designations (seasonal limitations and travel restricted to designated roads and trails as per the CRMAP) will maintain and protect significant values. Until the CRMAP is complete, travel will be limited to existing roads and trails.

#### Management Action Decision

6-1: Complete a CRMAP for the ACEC and address those special status plant values to be protected.



### Los Mogotes Area #7

All decisions in area #1 will apply here unless otherwise stated. Area #7 contains 33,456 acres of BLM-administered land.

#### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

7-1: Provide special management to protect and enhance big game crucial winter habitat, birthing habitats, and special status plant values.

#### Land Use Allocation Decisions

7-1: ACEC designation will provide protection for wildlife habitat, and this protection will be described in the

CRMAP. Seasonal limitations for development of the mineral materials during the winter months will also be included in the CRMAP.

7-2: Limited OHV designations (seasonal and travel restricted to designated roads and trails as per the CRMAP) will maintain and protect significant values. Until the CRMAP is complete, travel will be limited to existing roads and trails.

#### Management Action Decision

7-1: Complete a CRMAP with emphasis on protecting special status plant and animal values and big game crucial winter and birthing habitats as priority objectives.



### San Luis Hills #8

All decisions in area #1 will apply here unless otherwise stated. Area #8 contains 28,713 acres of BLM-administered land.

#### Resource Condition Objective Decision

8-1: Provide special management to maintain and, if possible, improve condition on the existing acres of Flat Top Mountain wetlands, big game habitat, and special status plant values.

#### Land Use Allocation Decisions

8-1: ACEC designation of the San Luis Hills area, including Flat Top Mountain, will provide protection for the significant natural values.

8-2: A no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation for fluid minerals management will be placed on the 2,000-acre SPNM portion of Flat Top Mountain in the ACEC.

8-3: The Flat Top Mountain segment (2,000 acres) of the ACEC will be closed to disposal of mineral materials.

8-4: Manage 2,000 acres of the Flat Top Mountain portion of the San Luis Hills ACEC as an OHV closed area.

8-5: The remainder of the ACEC will be designated as a limited OHV area with travel restricted to designated roads and trails. Until the CRMAP is complete, travel will be limited to existing roads and trails.

#### Management Action Decisions

8-1: Complete a CRMAP for the area to protect the existing significant values. This may be combined with the one for Rio Grande River Corridor #9.

8-2: Develop a research program for special status plant values.



8-3: Consider a joint study and analysis effort between New Mexico and Colorado BLM to determine a recommendation for the potential designation of all of the Rio Grande Corridor (57 miles in New Mexico and 41 miles in Colorado) as a national conservation area (NCA). The area in Colorado will include all of the San Luis Hills ACEC and the Rio Grande River Corridor ACEC and other unique areas appropriate for designation.



### Rio Grande River Corridor #9

All decisions in area #1 will apply here unless otherwise stated. Area #9 contains 2,640 acres of BLM-administered land. The 41-mile corridor contains 13,230 acres, which include BLM, USFWS, and private land.

### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

**9-1:** Provide special management for the significant natural/scenic/recreational values on 2,640 acres along a 22-mile stretch of the river administered by BLM as an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC). This portion of the corridor will be managed for strict conformance to visual resource management (VRM) class objectives, and for protection of the extensive wildlife resources and the potential recreational opportunities within this corridor.

**9-2:** Manage areas within the foreground area of the corridor that are presently VRM Class III as VRM Class II.

### Land Use Allocation Decisions

**9-1:** ACEC designation of the 2,640 acres within the Rio Grande River Corridor will provide protection for the significant wildlife and recreation values.

**9-2:** SRMA designation of 4,595 acres along a 29-mile stretch of the river administered by BLM will provide for the intensive management of recreation. The various scattered parcels of BLM-administered lands along the river between the Lasasues Cemetery and the County Bridge will be managed for their recreation access potential and will be developed as a portion of this SRMA. Development of recreation sites will occur within these 29 miles. Management emphasis in the Rio Grande River SRMA will be to enhance floatboating, fishing, and other recreational opportunities. BLM will acquire additional acreage and access in these areas. Acquisition of lands or interest in lands within the SRMA will be accomplished either by fee title methods (i.e., land exchanges with or acquisitions from willing sellers) or acquisition of scenic easements, which would allow landowners to retain title to the land.

**9-3:** A no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation for oil and gas leasing will protect the wild and scenic values, birds of prey values, visual values, etc., on the 2,640 acres of lands administered by BLM within the Rio Grande River Corridor ACEC.

**9-4:** The Rio Grande River Corridor ACEC (2,640 acres) will not be available for mineral materials disposal.

**9-5:** Locatable mineral entry will be precluded in this ACEC.

**9-6:** The lower 41 miles (1,850 acres USF&WS, 2,830 acres BLM, 8,550 acres private), of the Rio Grande River Corridor have been determined to meet the wild and scenic eligibility criteria; 22 miles (2,640 acres BLM and 4,400 acres private) of this corridor have been determined to meet the wild and scenic suitability criteria. Segment A has significant manageability problems and cannot be considered as suitable. The river has been potentially classified "scenic" for the upper 33 miles and "wild" for the lower 8 miles. The river corridor contains significant values deserving of some enduring form of protection. This protection could be through Wild and Scenic River designation, National Conservation Area designation, or some other appropriate means. The Federal legislative process will determine the most appropriate form of enduring protection. In the interim the river corridor will be managed to protect the outstanding remarkable values. See Attachment 7 in Appendix A in the proposed RMP/final EIS.

**9-7:** The potential waterpower site withdrawals that presently exist within the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River Corridor ACEC will be terminated if a wild and scenic river designation, or a national conservation area designation, etc. is approved by Congress.

**9-8:** The BLM-administered lands within the Rio Grande River Corridor ACEC are designated as limited; OHV use will be restricted to designated roads and trails. Until the CRMAP is complete, travel will be limited to existing roads and trails.

### Management Action Decisions

9-1: A coordinated resource management activity plan (CRMAP) will be completed for the ACEC/SRMA portion

9-2: Consider a joint study analysis effort between New Mexico and Colorado BLM to determine a recommendation for the potential of all the Rio Grande Corridor (57 miles in New Mexico and 41 miles in Colorado) as a national



of this river corridor. This site-specific CRMAP will address the protection of various special values within the corridor; e.g., special status plant and animal values, potential outdoor recreation opportunities and facility development needs, riparian values, visual resources, wildlife values, etc., as well as the interim management for wild and scenic river values. This CRMAP may be combined with the one for San Luis Hills #8.

conservation area (NCA). The Colorado portion of the corridor will potentially include all of the San Luis Hills ACEC, the Rio Grande River Corridor ACEC, and adjoining lands.

## Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad Corridor #10

All decisions in area #1 will apply here unless otherwise stated. Area #10 contains 3,824 acres of BLM-administered lands.

### Resource Condition Objective Decisions

10-1: Provide special management to the corridor for strict conformance to existing VRM class objectives.

10-2: Protection of historical and visual values will be emphasized in the CRMAP.

### Land Use Allocation Decisions

10-1: Designation of the minimum necessary foreground viewshed as an ACEC will provide protection for the unique scenic resources viewed from the train.

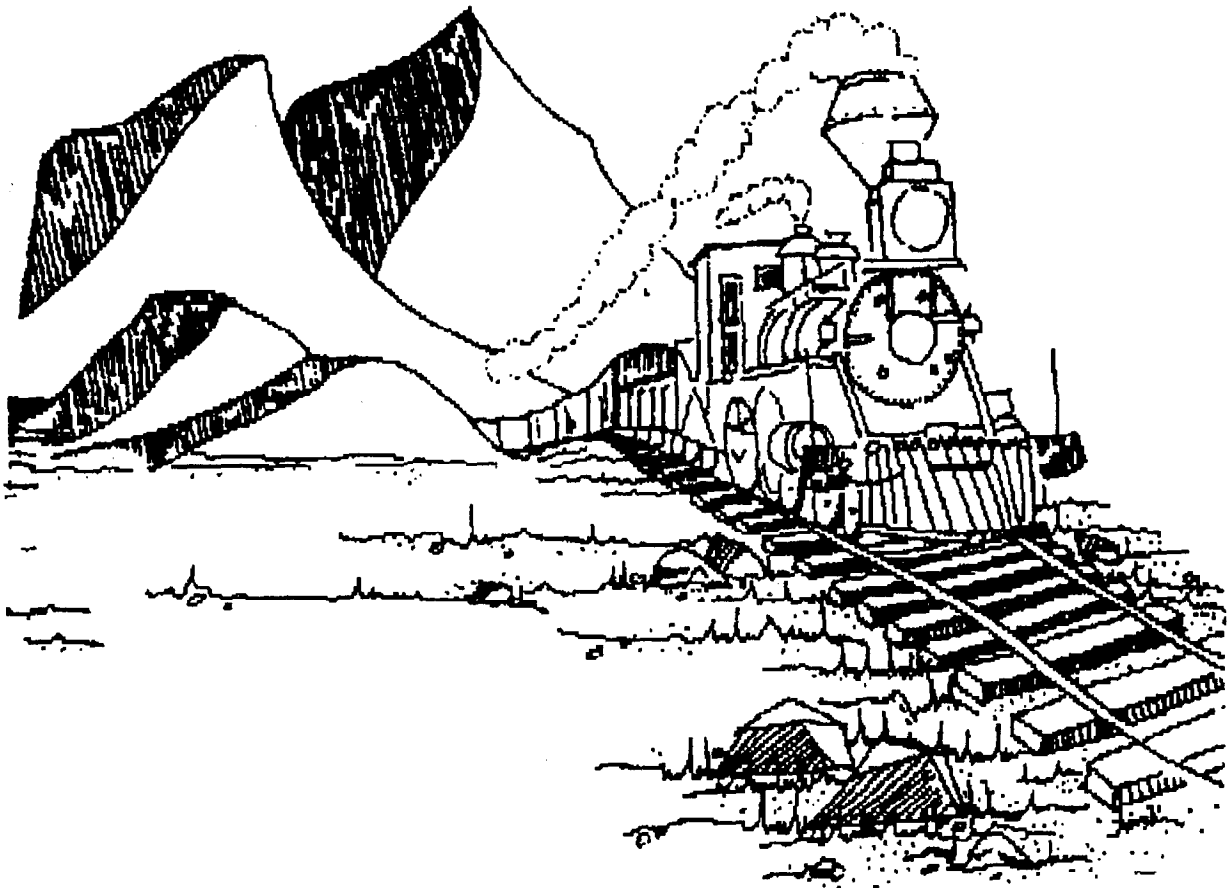
10-2: The ACEC will not be available for mineral materials disposal.

10-3: The ACEC will be leased for fluid minerals management with a no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation.

10-4: Limited OHV designation (seasonal and travel limited to designated roads) will continue. Until the CRMAP is complete, travel will be limited to existing roads and trails.

### Management Action Decision

10-1: Prepare CRMAP for area with emphasis on protection of unique scenic resource viewshed.



## ACTIVITY PLANS BY RESOURCE/RESOURCE USE

The following activity plans will be needed to implement decisions in this proposed RMP:

**Paleontology:** An area-wide surface-disturbance and development plan and a site-specific plan for the one public paleo use/educational site near Clayton Cone.

**Riparian Resources:** Site-specific planning as necessary for all riparian zones to modify existing habitat management plans (HMPs) or allotment management plans (AMPs) and to make site-specific input into various coordinated resource management activity plans (CRMAPs) for implementation of the RMP.

**Livestock Grazing:** In all pertinent allotments, modify and/or develop AMPs. Make site-specific input into various coordinated resource management activity plans (CRMAPs) to meet the specific decisions within the RMP.

**Wildlife Habitat Management:** Site-specific planning on all intensively managed wildlife areas in Trickle, Blanca, Los Mogotes, and the Rio Grande River Corridor will be done within a CRMAP. Special status species planning and input will be made into various CRMAPs and activity plans.

**Forest and Woodlands:** Site-specific planning will be done as part of a CRMAP for Trickle Mountain.

**Lands and Realty Management:** Site-specific planning for lands actions, etc., will be part of an area-wide combined support services management plan (SSMP)

**Areas of Critical Environmental Concern:** Site-specific planning to ensure that RMP decisions are implemented. Each ACEC will require a completed CRMAP.

**Historical and Archaeological Resources:** Cultural resource management plans (CRMPs) will be done (e.g., Punche Valley, La Garita Creek, Dry Creek, etc.), specific input into a CRMAP will be accomplished in special management areas (i.e., ACECs), and one area-wide CRMP will be done on all areas not covered specifically.

**Fire:** The existing activity plan will be reviewed and updated to comply with the RMP, which will occur at the first regularly scheduled annual review and up-date. Input into all CRMAPs will be done as needed.

**Recreation:** Either a recreation area management plan (RAMP); i.e., Zapata Falls and Penitente Canyon, or specific input into a CRMAP for intensively managed areas (i.e., Blanca and Rio Grande River Corridor).

**Support Services:** An area-wide combined support services management plan (SSMP) with other supporting services (i.e., access, transportation, cadastral, off-highway vehicle use, engineering, hazards, land ownership adjustment, recreation opportunity signing, off-highway recreation control signing, monitoring, etc.) to fulfill resource management plan (RMP) decisions.